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THE UNITARIAN

A MAGAZINE FOR FREE CHRISTIANS

BELFAST CENTRAL HALL

Building in Progress

The First Presbyterian Church, Belfast, the mother church of Presbyterianism in the city, and the central Non-Subscribing congregation, lost its hall by enemy action in 1941, and since then has been managing with a very small hall which was also damaged in the air raid, but repaired. The new hall which is now under construction adjoins the church, and, as the illustration shows, comprises a large hall on the first floor over a number of shops, one of which it is hoped to use as the denominational Book Room. The second floor includes office space, which will be let, a class-room and a Caretaker's Flat. A further floor can be added later, if required.

The main hall is designed to seat about 250, and is equipped with a stage 22 feet deep and a proscenium 20 feet wide and two changing rooms. A lift well is provided, but the lift will not be installed unless the money for this feature, amounting to £3,500 to £4,000, is forthcoming from the appeal which has been launched. £10,000 is needed to pay the difference between the amount received in War Damage compensation and the cost of the new building. The congregation of the First Church has already raised over £6,000. The total cost of the present contract is over £42,000.

The new hall will provide both for the needs of the church, and a central meeting place for the denominational organisations. The Church has a growing Sunday School and youth group. It is expected that the new hall will be completed by June,

1959. A considerable proportion of the cost of the building is due to the necessity of laying the foundations on piles, although the old hall was apparently not piled. The Appeal treasurer is Mr. Hugh McRobert, 17, Kingsland Park, Belfast.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

The "Game" Is On

Well, the day arrived, and rain poured down all morning! The sun then came out—and stayed; so the competitors duly gathered in the square. The Mayor had been asked to start the thing off and was present with the ball as the hour struck. He threw the ball into the air; but he wasn't quick enough. The competitors hurled themselves at the ball and for a short time nothing was seen of the Mayor! Then the ball was on the ground, somebody smote it hard and the pack of players (or runners) surged off down the lane. The cries died away, the Mayor picked himself up and decided that really he had come out of it quite well. He went to view the proceedings from one or two vantage points along the route.

The first was a gate between two of Farmer Merryweather's fields, marooned in thick, oozy mud. As the players approached the ball got stuck and the Mayor's enthusiasm waned as the mud flew generously in his direction! At the second point, a rather big pond, he played safety first. He waited at the nearby stile to allow the throng to pass by. The first competitor, however, found difficulty in crossing the stile. The Mayor, ever helpful, assisted him,—but failed to withstand the full weight of the pack of players immediately behind and was carried along with them! Everybody leapt into the pond, the ball was driven out and the players swept on. The Mayor eventually emerged wet, muddy and rather disheartened.

He managed to clean up and reached the crossroads as the first competitors came into view. About twenty stalwarts bore down on the finishing line and the Mayor prepared to welcome the first competitor. That worthy, however, steadied himself and gave the ball a tremendous swipe. It flew across the line at top speed, knocked the Mayor over, and his hat fell into the ditch!

The Mayor bore it well and tried to look dignified as he congratulated the winner. But he wondered whether he could persuade the Duchess next year!

IMPORTANT

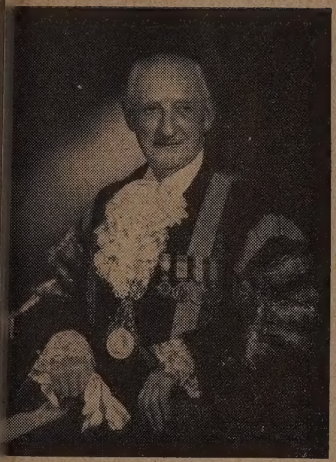
Schweitzer on Atomic War

Peace or Atomic War by Albert Schweitzer (Black 2s.) is a reprint of three radio talks from Oslo broadcast last April. The first deals with the effects of nuclear tests on the environment of living organisms, and maintains that it is not the business of the Nuclear Powers to decide whether they shall continue tests or not. It should be the question for international law, enthroned by the United Nations. The second talk deals with the danger of cold war degenerating into Atomic War. The third talk deals with a "Summit Conference," how it might be brought about, and how it might be used to relax tension and secure disarmament. Preachers and speakers on these issues could well afford to consider Dr. Schweitzer's arguments.

NEXT MONTH

A Khasi Hills Special Issue prepared by the Rev. Margaret Barr and her pupils at Kharang.

New pictures from Assam.



THESE ARE UNITARIANS

No. 7: R. H. Mottram, J.P., F.R.S.L.

By J. A. Kennedy

Set to answer a question which, they had elicited, had something to do with Norwich, the London team in a popular B.B.C. Quiz programme at once asked whether it could be the author, R. H. Mottram. This identification with his birthplace is something of which Mr. Mottram is justly proud. In spite of the wide reputation he has gained, and the opportunities to travel this has brought, he has always returned gladly to his native heath in East Anglia. No-one has a more intimate knowledge of the old Cathedral city of Norwich and its surrounding countryside, or has written of them with more acute observation and greater affection, whether he has been describing stirring times in their long history, or the ways of his Victorian forebears, or recreating the scene in his novels about East-hampton.

Ralph Hale Mottram was born in 1883 in the fine George II house in which Bartlett Gurney, the Quaker Uncle of Elizabeth Fry, had installed the "Banking Office" which later became Barclays Bank. He was educated at Bracondale School in Norwich and at Lausanne, and he repeated the experience of three previous generations by entering the service of Gurneys Bank. At the outbreak of war he enlisted, and in 1915 was commissioned and sent to Flanders, where he was subsequently seconded for special duties. In 1918 he married Margaret Allan, M.A., at the Octagon, and was demobilised the following year.

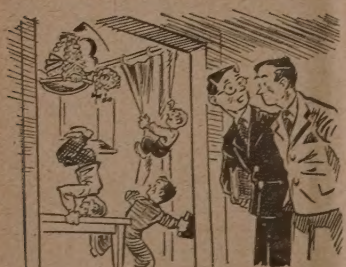
In 1927 he took the decisive and courageous step of resigning from the Bank to devote his time to literature. Appointed a Justice of the Peace for Norwich in 1932, at the outbreak of another world war he joined the Ministry of Information and served with the Home Guard. He gave much of his spare time to lecturing to the troops and became British Council representative with the United States Forces in Norfolk. Unstinting in his work on many committees and trusts, and on the Norwich Society which strives to preserve the amenities of the city, in 1953, the Coronation year, he was elected Lord Mayor of Norwich.

He began writing verse before 1904 when he met John Galsworthy, a friend of the family, who encouraged him in this but without success, and the small publications which ensued were failures. But in 1920 he turned to prose fiction, and after several attempts at other subjects, "The Spanish Farm," with a preface by Galsworthy, achieved publication and was awarded the Hawthornden Prize. Since then there have been twenty-five novels, twenty-three "general" list books, which include economics, biography, topography and essays, many broadcasts, one silent film, and tours as a lecturer

and man of letters at home, in France, Germany, Sweden, Holland and South America.

Of nothing has he written or lectured with more authority and feeling than of the Octagon Chapel, for he knows everything there is to be known about Thomas Ivory's lovely old Georgian meeting-house and his family connection with the Unitarian cause in the city must be something unique in our movement. It goes back to 1660 when John Mottram, a Woolcomber and Freeman, followed the Vicar of St. Stephen's, Dr. John Collings, when he was ejected from his living as a Presbyterian. Not until 1689 did they dare convert some private dwellings into a new centre of worship. From then, for 269 years in direct succession the Mottrams have been trustees of the congregation and the list includes some now under the age of 30.

Appointed President of the General Assembly in 1943, Mr. Mottram has served our churches in many capacities, including a period of 23 years as a trustee of Manchester College, Oxford. His own congregation has made him its life President, but in nothing does he support it more consistently than by his regular and punctual appearance at its weekly worship.



"We always emphasise the importance of liberty . . ."

CHRISTIANS AND U.N.A.

By John McLachlan

The world has never offered the ordinary man and woman so much opportunity for good and yet been so near to utter destruction as it is to-day. Science and technology, like fire, are good servants, but bad masters. If they get out of hand now, millions of people will suffer terrible deaths and the scourge of radiation will affect generations to come. For nuclear warfare is not only destructive of those who engage in it; it destroys human life in advance. Yet we live in an age of untold potential good, with great wealth and power at command if we care to use it for the benefit of all.

Despite the evidence that nuclear explosions are steadily poisoning the atmosphere all over the world, the three nations able to explode nuclear devices continue to do so and make the world increasingly unsafe for human habitation.

The world is torn by national, racial and ideological rivalries which threaten civilisation and deny the Christian gospel. Soon these rivalries will be made even more dangerous by the distribution of atomic armaments among a wider circle of nations. Is the Christian aware of what is going on under his nose? The United Nations struggles to maintain peace and points men to those vast tasks of reconstruction and social welfare which are capable of uniting all races, creeds and nationalities. It aims at creating a new sense of community, of world citizenship. Christian ideals of service and brotherly love are at stake. Yet comparatively few Christian people take a serious interest in the work of the United Nations.

The Preamble to its Charter summarises its aims: "To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war . . . to reaffirm faith

fundamental human rights . . . and to promote social progress and better standards of life and larger freedom." Such aims should make an immediate appeal, but we tend to think they are not our business.

A Belfast businessman, asked to contribute to the relief of the world's "forgotten people," the refugees, informed me rather curtly that he was "not interested in refugees any way!" I suppose he might be called a good man of business in the sense in which Scrooge applied that epithet to Jacob Marley in **A Christmas Carol**: You were always a good man of business, Jacob." "Business!" cried the Ghost, "Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence were all my business." Yes, as Christians, mankind is *our* business.

We ought to support the United Nations more. Think of its fine work for under-developed countries, for children and refugees. Think of the battle against illiteracy, starvation and disease, waged by the World Health Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund. Do you know that in Burma the chance of life for a new-born baby is one-tenth of that in Britain? Do you know that half the people in the world have never learnt to write; that two out of every three have never enough right food to eat? Well, the United Nations has made a start on a global campaign against ignorance, poverty, and disease—all potent breeding-grounds of hatred, misery and war.

The United Nations Association under its presidents, Mr. Harold Macmillan, Mr. Hugh Gaitskell and Mr. Joseph Grimmond, is the main body in Britain pledged to secure support for the United Nations. It takes practical action on behalf of refugees. It runs the work-camps where young people from different nations can meet and work for the unfortunate. It is out to promote friendship, understanding and co-operation among the peoples of the world. The annual subscription to the U.N.A. is 7s. 6d., or £1 with all literature supplied. The national H.Q. is at 25, Charles Street, W.1.

STAND SUNDAY SCHOOL

150th Anniversary

Stand Unitarian Sunday School celebrated its 150th anniversary in June with special services and a historical pageant. And this Sunday School, established in 1808 was not the first started by Unitarians in Whitefield. As early as 1783, perhaps earlier, Nathaniel Philips opened a school for Sunday instruction at his warehouse. This school grew to a membership of 500, and was removed to the parish workhouse.

In 1808 it was decided to start a Sunday School directly connected with the Unitarian congregation. It first met in a room adjoining the chapel, but as the numbers increased it was removed to Stand Grammar School, which had been closely connected with the chapel since its foundation in 1688. The present Sunday School premises on the other side of Ringley Road from the chapel were built in 1893 to mark the bicentenary of the chapel. The Philips family and others were great benefactors of education in the district, where separate boys' and girls' grammar schools now exist with fine modern buildings.

Stand Sunday School is famous for its annual Exhibition which comprises an annual arts and crafts competition with an exhibition of all kinds of work held early in September. The number of classes for entries is far greater than that in any of our district Sunday School festivals.

NEWS AND VIEWS

I.A.R.F.

This month the Congress of the International Association for Religious Freedom is meeting in Chicago. Its president is the President of our own General Assembly, the Rt. Hon. J. Chuter Ede, and there will be seventeen attending from the British Isles. The theme of the congress is "To-day's Religion can meet the World's needs to-day." Six panel discussion groups will consider the theme from different viewpoints.

OVERSEAS

AUSTRALIA. SYDNEY congregation was glad to have the Rev. W. Bottomley, of Seaford and Melbourne, as a visiting preacher in May. The new correspondence church magazine, of which 350 copies are printed, made a good start. Discussion groups are held three times a month, one at the church and two in the suburbs.

VANCOUVER. Youth Sunday was held in June, when the teen-age members of "Liberal Religious Youth" dealt with the theme "Youth Challenges Society."

AT HOME

BELFAST. The DOMESTIC MISSION, whose premises at Stanhope Street were taken over by the Education Authority, dedicated newly acquired premises in Hus Street, off Shankill Road, on June 8th, with a service conducted by the Rt. Rev. C. M. Kelly, B.A., the lesson being read by the Rev. Dr. H. J. McLachlan, and the address given by the Rev. Dr. A. L. Agnew.

DUDLEY. The Sunday School Anniversary on June 22 was conducted by the Rev. John Kielty, with special singing by the School members.

KIDDERMINSTER arranged a garden party for July 5th, opened by the Mayor of Kidderminster, with several stalls provided.

LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY. The meetings at Todmorden on June 11th were well attended. The Rev. Kenneth Twinn, M.A., of Chowbent, was the preacher. At the business meeting, £10 was voted to the Cross Street Chapel appeal fund, and plans made for organising in 1959 a Family Holiday Conference for Unitarians were approved. A vote of congratulation to the Women's League on attaining its Jubilee was also passed.

MANCHESTER. ALTRINCHAM Sunday School presented an original service, "The Tower of Life" on the afternoon of its anniversary day, when the morning and evening services were conducted by the Rev. Peter Godfrey, B.A. BLACKLEY Sunday School celebrated its centenary on July 6th, with services conducted by the Rev. Kenneth Sherratt, of Mansfield, and the Rev. D. C. Doel. This year for the traditional Whit-Sunday united procession, only the Gospel Mission and Unitarians turned out, and this will probably be the last occasion. PENDLETON were again hosts for the annual District Sunday School Rally on June 8th, when several Flower Queens attended with their supporters, and 275 children and 95 adults were present. The preacher was the Rev. Dr. R. W. Wilde. Six young members were received into church membership on June 29th. The party which spent Whit Week at Great Hucklow had a most enjoyable time, and register their warm thanks to the kind ladies who knitted woollen overlays for the beds, adding greatly to their comfort. SWINTON welcomed Mr. J. Chuter Ede as Guest speaker at their Centenary (church building) celebrations. URMSTON members have organised work parties on the re-erection of the former Cross Street hut as their Sunday School extension. Money-raising efforts for this building have included a Potato Pie Supper, which made £4, and a Bring-and-Buy Sale which made £5 10s. The Sunday

School enjoyed an outing to Lymm in June, and the Anniversary service in July was conducted by the Rev. A. W. Vallance.

STAND. The 150th Sunday School anniversary was held on June 22nd, morning service being conducted by the Rev. W. Priestley Phillips, M.A., afternoon service, with a scholars' reunion, by the minister, the Rev. S. H. Knight, and evening service by the Rev. G. D. Foote.

STOCKPORT held a Bring-and-Buy Sale on July 5th. The School enjoyed a day visit to Great Hucklow in Whit Week.

TODMORDON. The Junior Y.P.L. have issued an encouraging report for their first year's activity.

SUNDERLAND Church held a service of thanksgiving and rededication on June 8th, to mark the repayment of a mortgage which has been owing for over 80 years. The preacher was a former minister, Rev. Wm. Beer. At the tea which followed, Mr. J. Bellett handed over the Deeds to the Church President, Mrs. J. Armitage. A message from the Rev. J. Kielty on behalf of the G.A. was read, congratulating the church on being completely free from debt for the first time since its opening in 1831. Representatives from South Shields, Stockton and Middlesbrough, and the Northumberland and Durham Christian Association were present.

UNITARIAN INVENTION

Who invented the artificial satellite? In 1870 the *Atlantic Monthly* contained the first instalment of a novel, "The Brick Moon," by Edward Everett Hale, Unitarian minister in Boston, Mass., a well-known writer. It was about a group of people who intended to construct a moon, built of brick, in spherical shape, 200 feet across, to act as a guide to navigators. That was only a novel, but at any rate he had a pioneering idea.

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The Story and Significance of the Unitarian Movement
by W. G. Tarrant, B.A.
Reprinted with additional notes
1/6 by post 1/9
The Lindsey Press, 15, Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.

UNITARIANS IN THE NEWS

Dr. Edward Bramley, who is now 90, has been clerk to the trustees of Upper Chapel, Sheffield, for 65 years.

Rev. T. E. Nuttall, of Oldham, is president of the National Federation of Old Age Pensioners.

Miss Dorothy Tarrant, M.A., Ph.D., is president of the Classical Association.

The Rev. T. W. Roberts, of Pendleton, has retired from active ministry.

The Rev. Bruce Findlow, B.A., of Dudley, is going to Edinburgh, and the Rev. G. W. Parkinson, of Doncaster, to Scarborough and Whitby.

AUGUST

The trees stood sentinel upon the hill.
The golden ears of corn had drunk their fill
Of sunshine, and stood still,
All glorious and proud.
A lark sang in the cloudless sky,
His little wings had carried him on high,
I heard him sing, he was more glad than I.
The clover and the poppies hid
Were beautiful to see—
But nothing in the fields could comfort me.
I said, "When autumn comes
I will arise and go
And leave these Cotswold lanes,
Where life is dead and slow."
So back I went, home to a city street,
With soot-grimed walls, with hurrying feet,
And there you were, and I was glad.

Jean Jenkins.

UP TO DATE

For some reason many people avoid using the word "death," and all sorts of substitutes for it have been invented. An American Theological Seminary suggests that any references to the "grim reaper" should now be changed to the "international harvester!"

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